

beneficiaries to sign up for the prescription drug coverage without penalties, but nearly half the Nation's seniors do not know it.

The fact is that many beneficiaries are still unaware of the deadlines and the penalties, highlighting the fact that more time is needed. But even those who know about the deadlines and penalties are having a hard time with this confusing law. A new GAO report found that many beneficiaries are receiving inadequate, incorrect information from the Medicare hotline that many of us have been encouraging them to call to help them enroll.

It has been inadequate help to them and seniors should not be punished for that reason. The Wall Street Journal reported just a couple of days ago that the Federal investigators from the GAO posing as senior citizens found that the Medicare operators routinely failed to give callers accurate and complete information about the government's new drug benefit.

□ 2000

Investigators said that about one-third of their calls resulted in faulty responses or no response at all because of disconnected calls. This is not an atmosphere which should lead to the punishment of senior citizens who are making a good-faith effort to reach Medicare, to reach for the enrollment, to understand the program and make the decision for themselves or a member of their families on a timely basis.

Based upon a new analysis, there are probably about nine million beneficiaries with little or no drug coverage who still have failed to sign up. According to the nonpartisan CBO, delaying the deadline to December 31 would save more than 7 million beneficiaries from a lifetime of higher monthly premiums.

If the Republicans were truly interested in fulfilling the program that they designed, then they ought to extend the deadline so that senior citizens that we represent can have an opportunity to enroll and put off that penalty.

So I would hope—there is still time between now and the 15th, I would hope that now that they have passed this resolution, we would bring out legislation to provide an extension of time for seniors who are in fact acting in good faith.

The suggestion has not been made that seniors are trying to dodge the obligation. We know why there is a penalty. Eventually you want them all to sign up so people do not selectively enroll and cherry-pick and make the program more complex. But the indication is not that seniors are refusing or trying to dodge the program. The indication is that many are still reaching out in good faith to sign up for the program and to understand the program, but they just have not been successfully able to do that.

It seems to me that is not what a government should be doing is pun-

ishing people going through the process in good faith, but simply have not been able to negotiate it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ING-LIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent that I be allowed to claim the time of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise on the House floor tonight to talk about something that I think is one of the big solutions that we need to pursue here in the United States. And I would like to, first of all, talk about this first chart; and hopefully, Members can see it back in their offices. But this is a chart of the imports of petroleum as we have seen it from 1984 until 2005.

Back in 1984, we were importing less than 5.5 million barrels of oil a day; today, that number is over 13.5. In fact, I should say in 2005 it was about 13.5 million barrels a day. This is a scary chart because the direction is heading in the wrong direction.

Let's put some numbers on this. I am told that by this summer with \$70-a-barrel oil, we will be spending about a billion dollars a day to buy oil from countries, in many cases who are not particularly friendly to the United States. This is a serious problem. It is a challenge to our economic security and it is a challenge to our national security.

Now, renewable fuels are only part of the solution. I voted to increase the CAFE standards. I think conservation is an important part of solving our energy problems here in the United States. I believe in developing other kinds of energy. I voted consistently to develop the oil and the natural gas which we know is up in Alaska. I voted to expand the many uses of other energies.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we have not talked enough about, in my opinion, is our ability to grow more of our own energy. And so tonight I want to talk about renewable energy in general and ethanol in particular because I think there is huge misunderstanding, and it is not just among Members of Congress and the general public, it is among many of the policymakers even in the Department of En-

Mr. Speaker, there is still a misunderstanding about how much it costs to produce ethanol. In fact, we had a hearing of the Science Committee about 6 months ago. We had three top energy experts who testified before the committee. I asked all of them, I said, How much does it cost to produce a gallon of ethanol? Well, they started to look at their watches and their shoes and it was clear they did not want to answer the question.

Well, I said, make a guess. And the low guess, and these are energy experts, the low guess among those three experts was \$2 a gallon. The high estimate was \$3 a gallon. And I said, Would it surprise you to know that we are actually producing ethanol in Minnesota for less than \$1.20 a gallon? In fact, some of the plants at that time with lower natural gas prices were actually producing ethanol for about \$1 a gallon.

Today, with corn at about \$2 is a bushel and with oil at about \$70 a barrel, the cost right now to produce a gallon of ethanol at an efficient plant in the upper Midwest is about \$1.20 a gallon. Gasoline, on the other hand, right now costs about \$2.10 a gallon for unleaded gas.

Now, I have to be clear, though, and we want to be fair in this discussion. You do not get as many Btus, British Thermal Units, out of a gallon of ethanol as you do a gallon of unleaded gasoline. In fact, it is about 20 to 25 percent less. So you get less energy out of a gallon, partly because ethanol is 35 percent oxygen. That is good, though, because it means it burns much cleaner than gasoline.

Ethanol is better for our environment. It is better for our economy because that billion dollars a day that we may be spending this summer we are sending to countries that in some respects do not like us, and in worst cases they may be using part of that oil revenue to actually fund the terrorists.

The beauty of producing energy here in the United States, clean-burning ethanol in the United States, is that all of that money stays here in America where it recycles through our own economy. A new plant, for example, recently opened just west of Mankato, Minnesota, in the little town of Lake Crystal, Minnesota, and they told us they will be employing, on average, 42 workers in that plant, and the average starting wage will be somewhere over \$16 an hour plus benefits. These are good jobs that help our own economy right here in the United States.

But the point really needs to be made, not only is it better for our economy, it is better for our environment, but it is actually cheaper. So some people say, well, if it is better for the economy, if it is better for the environment and it is cheaper, why is more of it not available?

Well, the answer is simply this. The oil companies do not make any money on ethanol. I am not here to say that

the oil companies are evil, but right now they have a 98 percent market share, maybe a little less than 98 percent market share. They are not interested in giving away market share to ethanol, which is why I have introduced a bill called 10 By 10. And what it says, and I believe that success leaves clues, and what it says is that by 2010, 10 percent of our gasoline supply should be renewable energy. It is an idea whose time has come.

TEACHERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, this evening I come to the floor to remind my colleagues, just today we passed a tax bill that cuts taxes. In the next several weeks we will be back on this floor talking about the money for education. Unfortunately, we will be reducing our investment in education.

Tonight, though, I want to share with you a statement relating to our teachers. I was a great privilege on Saturday evening to speak to our State PTA in North Carolina; and they shared this story, and I want to share it with my colleagues because I think it ought to remind all of us what is important about the job we do, what is important here in America. Because too many times we get caught up in what people make and how much money they get, and today this Congress did just that. And let me share it with you.

Some dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. One man, a wealthy CEO, decided to explain the problem with education. He argued, What is a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher? He reminded the other dinner guests that it is true what they say about teachers. Those who can, do; those who cannot, teach.

To corroborate what he said, he turned to another guest. You are a teacher, Susan. Be honest. What do you make?

Susan, who had a reputation of being honest and frank, replied, You want to know what I make? I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I can make a C-plus feel like a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. And I can make an A-minus feel like a slap in the face if the student did not do his or her best. I can make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall in absolute silence. I can make parents tremble in fear when I call home.

You want to know what I make? I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them criticize. I make them apologize and mean it. I make them write and I make them read, read, read. I make them spell definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful over and over and over again until they will never misspell either of those words again.

I make them show all their work in math and hide it all on their final drafts in English. I make them understand that if you have the brains, then follow your heart. And if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make, you pay them no attention.

You want to know what I make? I make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, God bless all those who go into the classroom every day and make a difference, not because they are paid, but because they care about the future of this great country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CLIMATE CHANGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk for 5 minutes on this issue known as climate change. Are humans affecting the climate or is it the natural influence of natural variabilities?

Mr. Speaker, if people will look back into their middle school and high school years, they will remember their silence class, their geography class, maybe their geology class, and they learned that the planet Earth over millions of years varied in its climate. Sometimes we had very warm periods and sometimes we had very cold periods. Sometimes the tropics were as far north as Canada and sometimes ice ages covered much of North America. But the point is, what do we remember about the details and the facts on how they occurred?

I think maybe Jay Leno should ask that question in a "Jay Walking" exercise, "What do you know about climate change?" Well, in past eons of times, tens of thousands of years ago, millions of years ago there were very few human beings on the planet and those human beings were not burning fossil fuel.

Today we have six billion people on planet Earth and many of those people are burning coal, natural gas, oil, gasoline. They are burning for their energy sources fossil fuel. And the fossil fuel that we are burning in the modern era of time is putting more greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere in decades than the natural variabilities of planet Earth locked up over millions of years.

Why is fossil fuel important when we are looking at the issue of climate change or global warming? When you burn fossil fuel it puts into the atmosphere a gas known as CO or carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is the chief element, the chief gas, in the atmosphere that controls climate, that controls

the heat balance. We call this the "greenhouse effect." Sunlight comes in, but because of COG, some of it cannot be radiated out so we have had a pretty good of balance of climate on the planet, at least for the last few thousand years.

Now, how much COG is in the atmosphere that has this huge effect on the climate?

□ 2015

Less than 1 percent of the atmosphere is made up of carbon dioxide. Way less than 1 percent of the atmosphere is made up of carbon dioxide, but it has a huge effect. So you can see that any variability in carbon dioxide will have quite severe consequences on the planet.

How much CO₂ was in the atmosphere 10,000 years ago, at the very edge of the end of that Ice Age? Ten thousand years ago, there were 180 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Thousands of years later, with a warming trend, a natural warming trend on the planet, almost 10,000 years later, it was 280 parts per million.

Two hundred years ago on the planet, during the early American days, there were 80 parts per million CO₂ in the atmosphere. One hundred years ago, that increased by a small fraction; 100 years ago, there were 290 parts per million of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Now, this sounds like a lot of calculations and a lot of numbers. 100 years ago, 290 parts per million, heat balanced because of CO₂. One hundred years later, now, we are talking about 100 percentage points, 100 parts per million difference over 10,000 years.

What happened in the last 100 years? We are at 380 parts per million in the last 100 years. What normally would take 10,000 years to happen in a natural variation, variability, fluctuation, we did in 100 years. The estimate will be, by the year 2050, we are likely to be over 500 parts per million. That means we have had more of a dramatic increase in CO₂ that controls the climate in 100 years than happened 5 million years ago.

The Earth is warming because of the increase in CO₂ because of the burning of fossil fuel. The hottest years on record have happened since the 1980s. The major institutions of science in the United States have concluded that the matter of climate change is settled. Human activity is having an influence on the planet.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGLES of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.